

OUR NEW PACIFIC PROVINCE—WHAT IT IS.

(From the *Monetary Times*.)

On the 20th July the Province of British Columbia was formally proclaimed a part of the Dominion, on the terms and conditions laid down in the Act of last Session. It is quite expedient, in receiving this new and important member into the family of Provinces which make up our confederation, that we should become more intimately acquainted—that we should know better its wants, capabilities and resources.

British Columbia, with Vancouver's Island, has been incorporated, comprises the territory between the Rocky Mountains and the Pacific Ocean, from East to West, and extending from the frontier of the United States on the South to the Simpson and Findley river on the North. The length of coast line is stated at 450 miles, and the total area 220,000 square miles, which is larger than Ontario, with New Brunswick and Nova Scotia added to it. Salubrity of climate, with great mineral wealth, immense agricultural resources and splendid harbors, together with an enviable position on the coast of the Pacific, are characteristics which mark out this Province as the future home of a powerful and prosperous people.

It would be inconsistent with the object and scope of this article to refer at length to the general features of the country. Our remarks will have reference solely to its wants and opportunities, in so far as they directly interest business men.

The circulating medium of the Province consists of American coin, and the notes of the Bank of British North America and of the Bank of British Columbia. English money with the exception of sovereigns and shillings, is rarely seen. In 1869 the British Bank had notes to the amount of \$110,560 in circulation, and the British Columbia Bank \$105,831, together \$221,891. The united deposits of the two institutions were \$383,645. The Bank of British Columbia has a capital stock of \$1,490,000; in 1869 it declared a dividend of only 2½ per cent per annum. This exhausted \$18,066 of its earnings, leaving only \$3,853 as "reserve profits"—showing that it was not then what we would call a strong institution. It is a singular circumstance that the items of bills discounted, which assumes so prominent a place in your banking returns, does not appear in their bank statement at all; the reason being the Victoria bankers do not trust their money out in this way to any important extent. Their business consists largely of transactions in exchange. Drafts on Portland, Oregon, on San Francisco, and on London, are sold to a considerable extent, also government and navy bills. These are paid for in coin. Besides these two banks there are two firms which buy gold dust and bars, and draw exchange, Wells, Fargo, & Co., being the principal one. The exports of gold from the Province amount to two million dollars annually, besides what is carried away by private hands. The total amount obtained in Caribo and the copper country in 1860 was estimated at one million sterling. The gold assayed in Victoria and run into bars is sent into California, and generally sold at a discount of 2 and 3 per cent on the stamp on bar. This discount is owing to the scarcity of coin.

The sovereign has acquired the same fictitious value there, at which it has so long passed current in Nova Scotia, viz. \$5. This has led to the introduction of depreciated sovereigns, about 30 per cent of those in circulation being under legal weight. Cap-

ital commands a high rate of interest; some time ago 18 to 45 per cent per annum could be obtained on the best securities. We presume, however, that these extravagant rates could not now be realized. The government even on one occasion paid as high as 2 per cent a month, for a four months loan. Public sentiment is strongly in favor of a decimal currency and all accounts are kept in dollars and cents.

We shall conclude this article by making some reference to the coal deposits. These, after all, form the chief mineral wealth of the Province. Excellent coal, both bituminous and anthracite, is found in plenty, and is the only good coal on the Pacific coast—a fact which greatly enhances the importance of the deposits. The mine at Nanaimo, in Vancouver's Island, was formerly worked by the Hudson Bay Company, but is now operated most successfully by the "Vancouver Coal Company." It has an area of 90,000 square yards; three pits are opened and the seams are found about four feet in thickness. The shares of this company are at a premium of over 20 per cent. The coal commands a ready sale at 24 shillings per ton, at the mouth of the pit. The yield of coal at Nanaimo, in 1869, was 40,833 tons, or enough to supply the city of Toronto: of this 17,700 were exported to foreign ports. The coal possesses excellent burning qualities, having 66 per cent of carbon. About 70 miles north of Nanaimo there is an extensive coal area, on which several companies have taken up claims. Anthracite coal has been discovered on Queen Charlotte's Island and is being raised by a company. It readily sells at \$10 at the mouth of the pit, or \$16 delivered at San Francisco.

A country situated as that Province is and with such supplies of coal will necessarily become a manufacturing centre. Endowed with such resources, all that is needed is lines of communication—facilities for travel and cheap land and water carriage. Under the provisions of the Act incorporating British Columbia with the Dominion this great want is likely to be fully met, and at the earliest day possible, in view of the serious obstacles that have to be surmounted. With a line of communication from the Atlantic to the Pacific on Canadian territory, we should be in a position to present inducements to the immigrant, whether he be agriculturist, manufacturer or miner, such as can be offered by no other country on the face of the globe.

THE USES OF GUN COTTON.

The *London Times* says:—

"The important points in connection with the gun cotton of the present day be thus briefly summed up. The material in the first instance, is neither wool nor yarn previous to conversion, but simply a good quality of cotton waste, which after proper treatment in acid, is reduced to paper pulp, and in this finely divided state washed and cleansed by water. The pulped mass is then pressed into any desired figure or shape, and the cakes thus produced not only present the explosive in a highly compressed condition, but also in a remarkable handy form. As the cotton is pressed while in a wet and, consequently harmless state, no danger can accrue in the whole of the manufacture from first to last, if we except possible accident from tampering with the acids—an event of but slight importance even when it might occur—and in this respect therefore, gun-cotton is much safer than gunpowder. The dry gun-cotton cakes, however may be

be ignited in two ways, either by simple inflammation or by detonation. If a few cakes of gun-cotton, or wooden cases containing the same are set on fire, they will simply blaze away, furiously and violently, it is true but at any rate without an absolute explosion, and it is only when the material is strongly confined, or heated to an exceedingly high temperature, that its full force developed.

"If, however, instead of being set on fire by spark or flame, it is ignited by means of a charge of fulminate of mercury, one of the most violently detonating compounds known to chemists, then gun-cotton becomes another thing altogether, and explodes with the terrible force of a charge of fulminate of mercury itself. This is an important property of gun cotton, which was discovered about three years ago by Mr. C. Brown, of the Chemical Establishment at Woolwich, where indeed all the experimental investigations have been carried on, adds greatly to the value of the explosive which under ordinary circumstances comparatively inert and harmless upon brought into contact with fulminate powder. The difference between burning a detonating gun-cotton will at once be understood when we say that a half pound cake may actually be held in a plate at arm length during inflammation, while the act of the same amount fired with a fulminate charge would be to fracture a one-inch slab of iron upon which it rests.

"For the past five years several tons of the material have been manufactured for the British Government, and employed to great advantage in mining and blasting operations, and especially for the demolition of marine rocks and sunken wrecks, whose removal could certainly not have been so efficiently and completely effected in any other manner. For many military engineering purposes, as also for torpedoes, and its value has been found unequalled; and when we say that all these years no mishap has occurred in its manipulation, it must be admitted that there is something to be urged against hastily dismissing it in a panic as a material too dangerous for practical use."

PETRIFICATION.

W. P. Bain, M.D., writes as follows to *Lancet*, on the subject of Dr. Marini's preparations of the human body:—

"Having handled some of his preparations in Florence last autumn, I am able to say, that he is the inventor of a method of turning the human body or any part of it into stone, in any attitude that may be desired. I enclose the photograph of a Senator of the Italian Parliament, taken 18 months after his decease, in which he is presented seated in his chair with his clothes on, just as when alive, his eyes retaining in an astonishing degree the vivacity of life. I also enclose the photograph of a table, the slab of which is formed of plaster of Paris, and which is covered with the human body—brain, muscles, & all turned into stone, and which, when struck by me, sounded as a marble table. I also inspected a lady's foot, likewise petrified, and which had every appearance of being alive, until, upon close inspection, the texture of the skin was apparent. Dr. Marini also showed me some specimens of the human body in a moist and perfect condition, served for years. He assured me also that the week before he had dined of a dish which had been killed months previously. The foot of a mummy was in his apartment at the time of my visit, in which the